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Long Range Planning Committee
Montana Legislature

RE Grants - Hebgen Lake Estates

Dear Legislators,

Hebgen Lake Estates property owners have a serious problem. Its aging wastewater treatment system is out of compliance with Montana Water Quality Laws. The system must be upgraded to meet standards.

Currently there are about 50 homes in the subdivision with about 60 vacant lots. There is about an even mixture of full-time and recreational residents. In general, the lots (most are one-quarter acre) and homes are relatively small and modest. Hebgen Lake Estates should not be compared to Big Sky. In general, the residents have middle class incomes, however several of the year round residents are at lower income levels.

Hebgen Lake is located in a special environment. It sits inland on a peninsula of Hebgen Lake at 6,600 feet elevation. It is about 8 miles west of Yellowstone National Park and abuts the Gallatin National Forest. We receive lots of snow and it is one of the coldest locations in Montana. Many of the Yellowstone bison are frequent visitors.

It has been estimated that it will cost about \$2.5 million to upgrade the system. The costs beyond any grant monies received will be borne by the property owners. The financed cost to fund the improvements may be as much as \$125 per lot per month. Note that this includes the vacant lots as well as actual users.

Property owners petitioned Gallatin County to allow an election to form a County Water and Sewer District to provide for local management of the system and to be eligible for additional grant funds (TSEP). The election is scheduled for early February.

Grant monies received will be used by the District if the election is successful, or be used by the County to partially fund the required wastewater treatment improvements. In either case, the grants will lower the burden on the property owners.

We would greatly appreciate any grant monies or actions by the Legislature to help us solve our problem. The grant money will be put to good use.

Thank you for you consideration.

John Carstensen